

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

Date 24 February 2026 MDE 18/0679/2026

LEBANON: ISRAELI STRIKES ON DENSELY POPULATED RESIDENTIAL AREAS KILLED CIVILIANS WITHOUT WARNING

More than a year after the ceasefire, victims of violations of international law in Lebanon are still waiting for justice and reparations. Given Israel's longstanding pattern of grave and unaddressed violations in Lebanon and beyond, states must urgently step up efforts to ensure accountability, including by exercising domestic, universal, or other forms of extraterritorial jurisdiction to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute crimes under international law. The Lebanese government should also grant the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over Rome Statute crimes committed on their territory and initiate credible domestic investigations into crimes under international law. Ensuring accountability means not only prosecuting suspected perpetrators but also securing effective remedy for victims and taking meaningful steps to guarantee non-repetition.

In a new investigation published today, Amnesty International highlights two Israeli air strikes on residential neighbourhoods that took place more than a year ago, killing 34 civilians and injuring at least 23. Amnesty International's research into these attacks did not identify military objectives in the vicinity of these sites at the time they were struck. Amnesty International has reasonable basis to conclude that the Israeli military violated international humanitarian law in both strikes. The organization is calling for these strikes to be investigated as war crimes.

Amnesty International has documented repeated international humanitarian law violations during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. Since October 2023, Amnesty International has documented the Israeli military's use of white phosphorus,¹ and indiscriminate mass explosions targeting electronic devices.² Israeli attacks in Lebanon have had a significant civilian toll, and have included attacks on journalists,³ health facilities, ambulances and paramedics.⁴

In addition to the two newly documented air strikes, which were carried out without warnings, in 2024, Amnesty International documented four unlawful Israeli air strikes, carried out without warnings, that destroyed or damaged civilian objects and killed 49 civilians. The organization found that Israeli forces unlawfully struck residential buildings in the village of al-Ain in northern Bekaa on 29 September; the village of Aitou in northern Lebanon on 14 October; and in Baalbeck city on 21 October. Israeli forces also unlawfully attacked the municipal headquarters in Nabatieh in southern Lebanon on 16 October.⁵ In August 2025, the organization released a report showing how the Israeli military extensively destroyed and damaged civilian structures and agricultural land in southern Lebanon between 1 October 2024 and 26 January 2025, continuing well after the November 2024 ceasefire.⁶

Amnesty International also documented Hezbollah's unlawful firing of unguided rockets into populated civilian areas in Israel, leading to the death and injury of civilians and the destruction of civilian homes. The organization focused on three

¹ Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Evidence of Israel's unlawful use of white phosphorus in southern Lebanon as cross-border hostilities escalate", 31 October 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/lebanon-evidence-of-israels-unlawful-use-of-white-phosphorus-in-southern-lebanon-as-cross-border-hostilities-escalate/>

² Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Establish international investigation into deadly attacks using exploding portable devices", 20 September 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/09/lebanon-establish-international-investigation-into-deadly-attacks-using-exploding-portable-devices/>

³ Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Deadly Israeli attack on journalists must be investigated as a war crime", 7 December 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/lebanon-deadly-israeli-attack-on-journalists-must-be-investigated-as-a-war-crime/>

⁴ Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Israeli attacks on health facilities, ambulances and paramedics must be investigated as war crimes", 5 March 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/03/lebanon-israeli-attacks-on-health-facilities-ambulances-and-paramedics-must-be-investigated-as-war-crimes/>

⁵ Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Israeli air strikes that killed at least 49 civilians further evidence of war crimes", 12 December 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/lebanon-israeli-air-strikes-that-killed-at-least-49-civilians-further-evidence-of-war-crimes/>

⁶ Amnesty International, "Lebanon: No where to return: Israel's extensive destruction of Southern Lebanon", 26 August 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2025/08/israel-lebanon-extensive-destruction/>

Hezbollah rocket attacks on Metula Tarshia, and between Shefa Amr and Kiryat Ata, in October 2024 that killed eight civilians and injured at least 16 more.⁷

For this latest investigation, Amnesty International focused on two attacks carried out in densely populated residential areas during the final weeks of the 2024 escalation. The two attacks killed at least 34 civilians, including at least seven children. In July and September 2025, Amnesty International visited the site of an attack on the Cherri building in the Nouweiri neighbourhood and conducted 10 interviews, including with six family members of victims, three neighbourhood residents, and the area's mukhtar (local-level government representative). The organization also collected photos and videos that showed efforts to extinguish the fire, rescue operations, and damage to the building. In September and October 2025, Amnesty International visited the site of the attack in the Jnah neighbourhood, facing the entrance of Rafik Hariri University Hospital, and interviewed four survivors and relatives of those killed. Amnesty International also examined satellite imageries and collected photos and videos taken before and after the attack.

Amnesty International sent questions regarding the attacks to the Israeli military on 3 December 2025, and examined official statements made by the Israeli military, Hezbollah and other armed groups. The organization also sent requests for information to actors in Lebanon involved in responding to air strikes, including the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the General Directorate of the Civil Defence (emergency response), and Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) on 29 and 30 September 2025.⁸ The organization's Evidence Lab analysed and verified over 120 photos and 23 videos taken in the aftermath of the attacks.

Based on the organization's investigation, the Israeli military did not issue evacuation warnings before carrying out these attacks; nor did Israel identify a military target after the attack. Israel also did not explain why it would not have been feasible to warn civilians. Amnesty International was able to identify the weapon used in the Nouweiri attack, the US-made GBU-39 Small Diameter Bombs.

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) wrote to Amnesty International that the attacks were the first to hit the Nouweiri neighbourhood and the area around the Rafik Hariri University Hospital in the Jnah neighbourhood since October 2023. According to the LAF, the locations targeted in these attacks did not contain military sites affiliated with the Army, Hezbollah, or any other factions participating in the conflict.⁹ Amnesty International reviewed public communication by Hezbollah and other armed groups. Such communications often have announced the deaths of Hezbollah officials and fighters, typically describing them as "martyrs on the road to Jerusalem" and celebrating their "martyrdom." Amnesty International found nothing in Hezbollah communications that would help identify any targets in these two attacks.

The principle of distinction, a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law, requires parties to distinguish at all times between combatants or military objectives and civilians or civilian objects, and to direct their attacks only at combatants and at military objectives.¹⁰ In addition to prohibiting attacks directed at civilians or at civilian objects, international humanitarian law prohibits indiscriminate attacks, meaning those that are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction.¹¹ In order to avoid indiscriminate or other unlawful attacks, parties must respect the principle of precaution, which requires parties to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects, including by taking all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event minimize, incidental harm to civilians and damage to civilian objects.¹² This includes doing everything feasible to verify that targets are military objectives, giving effective advance warning of attacks that may affect the civilian population, unless circumstances do not permit, and choosing means and methods of attack to minimize civilian harm.¹³

⁷ Amnesty International, "Israel: Hezbollah's use of inherently inaccurate weapons to launch unlawful attacks violates international law", 20 December 2024,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/israel-hezbollahs-use-of-inherently-inaccurate-weapons-to-launch-unlawful-attacks-violates-international-law/>

⁸ The General Directorate of the Civil Defence, reply to Amnesty International's letter TG MDE 18/2025.6990, received on 21 November 2025, on file with Amnesty International.

⁹ The Lebanese Armed Forces, reply to Amnesty International's letter TG MDE 18/2025.6989, received on 10 December 2025, on file with Amnesty International.

¹⁰ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Rules 1, 7.

¹¹ ICRC, Customary IHL, Rules 11, 12.

¹² ICRC, Customary IHL, Rule 15.

¹³ ICRC, Customary IHL, Rules 16, 20, 17.

26 NOVEMBER 2024, NOUWEIRI NEIGHBORHOOD

At 5:30 p.m. on 26 November 2024 – 10 and a half hours before a ceasefire came into effect at 4 am on 27 November 2024, an Israeli air strike hit a 12-story apartment building in Nouweiri neighbourhood, Beirut,¹⁴ killing at least seven civilians, all residents of the building. The Israeli military did not issue a warning before carrying out the attack. The strike caused three floors of the building to collapse and severely damaged a fourth.¹⁵

Amnesty International's team analysed dozens of videos and photographic material from the scene, examined satellite imagery of the location, and interviewed residents and survivors. Those killed included three people over 65 years old, two adult men, and two Ethiopian women who worked with families as live-in domestic workers. One of these women had postponed her return to Ethiopia due to war-related flight cancellations, her employer's son said.¹⁶

Amnesty International's weapons experts examined photos of weapons remnants found at the location of the strike and identified a GBU-39 Small Diameter Bomb, a precision-guided munition manufactured in the United States by Boeing Integrated Defence Systems and exported to Israel from the United States.¹⁷

After the attack, residents of the building speculated that brothers Mahmoud Mohammed Cherri and Emad Mohammed Cherri may have been the targets of the attack. Mahmoud was killed and Emad wounded. Their brother, who did not live in the building, represented Hezbollah in Parliament. Despite their brother's political affiliation, residents said they did not believe either Mahmoud or Emad played a military role in Hezbollah, and Amnesty International found no evidence to the contrary. Emad, a café owner in his fifties, had lived in the building with his family for decades. Mahmoud, a minimarket owner also in his fifties, had moved in with his younger brother about a month before the strike, following intensified Israeli attacks on Beirut's southern suburbs. If the target was either of the brothers, residents wondered why the Israeli military attacked while they were in a residential building, when families would be at home, rather than another time or place. "They weren't hiding," one resident said. "They walked the streets every day."¹⁸

Amnesty International has reasonable basis to conclude that the Israeli air strike violated international humanitarian law, constituting either an indiscriminate attack or a direct attack on civilians or a civilian object. It should be investigated as a war crime. Amnesty International wrote to the Israeli authorities on 3 December 2025 seeking information about the military objectives targeted at this location and the measures taken to avoid or minimize civilian harm but did not receive a response prior to publication. Amnesty International's research did not find any indication that there were military objectives present at the time of the attack. Even if Israel intended to target someone in the building who they considered a military objective, the means and method of this attack on an apartment building full of civilians likely would make this an indiscriminate attack.

Lara Cherri, the daughter of Nadira Hayek, 77 years old, and Mahmoud Naim Cherri, 87 years old, both of whom were killed in the strike, said that her parents had felt safe in the apartment because they were confident there weren't any potential military targets living in the building: "We weren't worried. We never saw anyone scary or with bodyguards."¹⁹

The night of the attack, Israeli forces intensified their military operations, launching a huge wave of attacks across Lebanon, including multiple air strikes in Beirut, before a ceasefire came into effect at 4 am.²⁰ The Lebanese Civil Defence told Amnesty International that on that day alone they undertook "50 rescue operations within Beirut and its southern suburbs and 300 rescue operations across Lebanon, including evacuating the injured and recovering bodies."²¹

¹⁴ Interviews in person and by phone, Lara Cherri, Rana Cherri, Mahdi Harkous, Moussa Harkous, Ali Harkous, the son of a victim who preferred anonymity, Muhieddine Al-Masri, Mahmoud Nakhal, a resident of the neighbourhood, a shop employee in the neighbourhood, 27 July 2024, 11 August 2025, 17 September 2025; Al-Jadeed TV live coverage, "Another Attack on the City of Beirut", 26 November 2024.

¹⁵ Interviews in person, Lara Cherri, Rana Cherri, Mahdi Harkous, Moussa Harkous, Ali Harkous, the son of a victim who preferred anonymity, 27 July 2024 and 11 August 2025.

¹⁶ Interview by phone with anonymous, 11 August 2025.

¹⁷ A Lebanese army official told Amnesty International that army officers had extracted an unexploded missile from the location of the attack, and based on the analysis of the weapon, concluded that an Israeli warplane carried out the attack. The Lebanese Armed Forces, reply to Amnesty International's letter TG MDE 18/2025.6989, received on 10 December 2025, on file with Amnesty International.

¹⁸ Interview in person with Rana Cherri, daughter of victims Nadira Hayek and Mahmoud Cherri, 27 July 2025.

¹⁹ Interview in person with Lara Cherri, daughter of victims Nadira Hayek and Mahmoud Cherri, 27 July 2025.

²⁰ Reuters, "Israeli strikes pound central Beirut, suburbs after first warnings for areas inside the city", 27 November 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-strikes-pound-central-beirut-suburbs-2024-11-26/>

²¹ The General Directorate of the Civil Defence, reply to Amnesty International's letter TG MDE 18/2025.6990, received on 21 November 2025, on file with Amnesty International.

A few hours before the ceasefire went into effect, at 5:15 p.m., the Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesperson issued evacuation warnings via X, identifying four targets in densely populated central Beirut neighbourhoods: Ras Beirut, Al-Mazraa, Musaytabeh, and Zouqaq el-Bilat.²² But no warning was issued for Nouweiri, another densely populated residential area in central Beirut, where Lara's parents lived.

After hearing that the Israeli military had issued a series of warnings for Beirut, Lara and her sister Rana decided to take their families and move for a few days outside the city. Their parents refused to leave home, as the Israeli military had not issued an evacuation warning for their neighbourhood and given reports that a ceasefire would come into effect in a few hours.

Rana began to drive to their parents' house with the hope to convince them of joining the family in the mountains. A little after 5.30, Lara's son received a video showing a fire in an apartment building and screamed: "Teta's house! Teta's house!"

The air strike occurred before Rana arrived.

Muhieddine, a fish shop owner who lived and worked across the street from the building, told Amnesty International: "We heard an extremely loud sound and glass breaking. I went out to find a scary scene. People were shouting and the street was totally dark. The only light came from the huge and growing fire on the top of the building."

Rana described "a torrent of fire" coming out of the building and said she ran towards it:²³ "I was running like I could still catch them."²⁴

Later that night, Lara's sons identified their grandmother's body at Rafik Hariri University Hospital. Their grandfather's body was found in the building a few days later.²⁵

Residents of the area said they were unaware of any military objectives in the area. Muhieddine said his family had stayed in the neighbourhood throughout the war because it felt safe, he said. "We've lived here since 2000. There are no military offices, no weapons, nothing. And then, suddenly, that horror scene happened."²⁶

Mahmoud Nakhal, the mukhtar of the area, said: "The neighbourhood is home to a diverse population. There are no military locations here... I don't have a reason why Israeli air forces bombed it."²⁷

21 OCTOBER 2024, JNAH NEIGHBOURHOOD

At about 10:30 pm on 21 October 2024, an Israeli air strike hit a yard separating small, densely packed residential buildings in a poor part of the Jnah neighbourhood, which is near the coast, administratively part of Mount Lebanon governorate, and generally considered part of Greater Beirut. Witnesses said that the air strike hit a courtyard where children had gathered to play and young women were smoking shisha.²⁸

Amnesty International's team analysed dozens of videos and photographic material from the scene, examined satellite imagery of the location, and interviewed residents and survivors. Amnesty International identified 27 people who were killed in the strike, including seven Lebanese men, six Lebanese women, seven children, three of whom were 10 years old or younger, one Sudanese national and six Syrian nationals, and 22 people who were wounded, including nine children and five Syrian nationals. The bodies of two Syrian men remain missing, a resident said.²⁹

Amnesty International has reasonable basis to conclude that this strike violated international humanitarian law. It should be investigated as a war crime. The day after the strike, and following local and international outcry, including a statement by a UN official calling for a prompt investigation into the Jnah attack,³⁰ the Israeli military said on X that they had targeted "Hezbollah weapons storage facilities, command centres and additional terrorist targets in Beirut overnight, some of which

²² Avichay Adrae, the Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesperson, X post, 26 November 2024, <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1861428483966050423>

²³ Interview in person with Rana Cherri, daughter of victims Nadira Hayek and Mahmoud Cherri, 27 July 2025.

²⁴ Interview in person with Rana Cherri, daughter of victims Nadira Hayek and Mahmoud Cherri, 27 July 2025.

²⁵ Interview in person with Mahdi and Moussa Harkous, grandsons of victims Nadira Hayek and Mahmoud Cherri, 27 July 2025.

²⁶ Interview in person with Muhieddine Al-Masri, owner of a fish shop and a house facing the Cherri building, 17 September 2025.

²⁷ Interview in person with Mahmoud Nakhal, Mukhtar of the area, 17 September 2025.

²⁸ Interviews in person with Ola Eid, Fouad Hassan, Abou Hussein Al-Mokdad, and Salam Hassan, victims of the attack, 8 September 2025 and 1 October 2025.

²⁹ Interview in person with Fouad Hassan, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.

³⁰ UN News, "UN renews call to protect civilians as deadly Israeli strike hits close to key Beirut hospital", 22 October 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155981>

were located underground and included aerial and naval equipment.”³¹ The statement did not specify the locations or times of strikes and did not mention Jnah.

Amnesty International found no evidence of a military objective.

Even if the general allegations in the statement referred to alleged military objectives in Jnah, the failure to take feasible precautions, including effective warning to civilians, likely would make the air strike an indiscriminate attack. Amnesty International wrote to the Israeli authorities on 3 December 2025 seeking information about the military objectives targeted at this location and the measures taken to avoid or minimize causing civilian harm but did not receive a response prior to publication. Amnesty International found no evidence of a military objective in its investigation, raising concerns that it may have been a direct attack on civilians or civilian objects.

In its 22 October statement, released the day after the strike, the Israeli military claimed to have taken “numerous steps... to mitigate the risk of harming civilians, including issuing precise and advanced warnings to civilians in the area.”³² Amnesty International reviewed the social media accounts and the official channels the Israeli military used to issue evacuation warnings, and there were none for the Jnah neighbourhood on 21 October.³³ Residents said they considered the area safe due to their proximity to the Qatari embassy (1.4 km away), the Ministry of Public Health (350 metres away) and the Rafik Hariri University Hospital (50 metres away). Four survivors told the organization that they did not see any evacuation warnings for their neighbourhood prior to the attack.

Ola Eid, an actress known as “Warda” who lived in the area, told Amnesty International that she used to organize drawing sessions and games for the children in the neighbourhood every night. They used to assemble in the yard, which was lit by lights attached to a generator. On the night of the attack, they gathered as usual. Eid said, “We were drawing on the ground with coal... the drones would see [the group in the yard] were just kids.”³⁴

When the strike hit the courtyard, the explosion threw her against a wall, she said. “I saw Zainab and Fatima dead. They were children. My soul screamed.”³⁵ Injured and barefoot, she pulled survivors from the rubble and helped evacuate the wounded to the nearby Rafik Hariri University Hospital. She remembered helping an eight-year-old boy, a diabetic man, and two Syrian women—one with a head wound. “I kept her awake by asking where she was from,” Eid said.³⁶

Ola Eid’s husband, Fouad Hassan, an actor who went by the nickname “Al-Zaghoul”, was also wounded in the attack. He told Amnesty International: “I was asleep and woke up in the hospital. My eye nerves got damaged, and my shoulder badly injured. I’ve had two surgeries and need a third.”³⁷

He said, before the strike his 21-year-old granddaughter “kissed me and asked what I’d get her for her birthday, then went to smoke shisha with the girls, in the yard. Half an hour later, we found her shredded behind the building.”³⁸

Fouad Hassan told Amnesty International that rescue workers dug deep in search of missing bodies and found no underground military facilities or equipment.³⁹

Many residents of the area support the political party of Hezbollah or its ally, the Amal Movement, but residents said they were unaware of anyone in the buildings around the yard at the time of the attack who was involved in military activity. Posters in the neighbourhood showed two men in military clothes; one of whom residents said died fighting with Hezbollah in Syria long before the attack, and another whom residents said died in southern Lebanon during the war.

³¹ Israeli Defence Forces, the Israeli military, post on X, 22 October 2024, <https://x.com/IDF/status/1848633945350398114>

³² Israeli Defence Forces, the Israeli military, post on X, 22 October 2024, <https://x.com/IDF/status/1848633945350398114>

³³ Amnesty International reviewed the platforms the Israeli military used to publish the evacuation orders: the Israeli military Arabic-language spokesperson Avichay Adraee’s page on X, the Israeli Defence Forces official channel on X, the Israeli Defence Forces official website, the post-attack coverage of the Times of Israel newspaper, the war-logs on several Israeli media platforms, and found that no evacuation order was issued for this location.

³⁴ Interview in person with Ola Eid, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.

³⁵ Interview in person with Ola Eid, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.

³⁶ Interview in person with Ola Eid, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.

³⁷ Interview in person with Fouad Hassan, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.

³⁸ Interview in person with Fouad Hassan, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.

³⁹ Interview in person with Fouad Hassan, victim of the attack, 8 September 2025.